Nibbana & The Nature of Experience

Sermon 01:
The Deconstruction of Name, Form, and Existence

Based on the teachings of Ven. Katukurunde Nyanananda & Ven. Bhikkhu Anālayo. An exploration of the "Deep Suttas" that challenge the conventional understanding of reality.

THE WORLD IS ENTANGLED IN A TANGLE...

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The Meeting of Theory and Practice

Context

This sermon was delivered at the Nisarana Vanaya monastery, a strict forest tradition center where monks determined not to leave until attaining Stream-entry.

The Bridge

Ven. Nyanananda, an accomplished meditator and academic scholar, was invited to clarify controversial points regarding the 'Deep Suttas' on Nibbana.

The Goal

To move beyond dry commentaries and address the 'meditative attention' required for realization.

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The Diagnosis: The Tangle Within and Without

'The world is entangled in a tangle. Who can disentangle this tangle?' — Samyutta Nikaya

The Buddha's answer lies in the cutting off of Name and Form (Nama-Rupa), Resistance (*Patigha*), and the Perception of Form.
The problem is not the world itself, but our cognitive entanglement entanglement with it.

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The Illusion of ‘Name’ (Nama)

The Critique
Commentaries often define 'Name' merely as 'bending' the mind toward an object.

The Sutta Definition
The Buddha defines Name as a process of handling experience: Feeling, Perception, Intention, Contact, and Attention.

The Truth
A 'Name' is not a label; it is the subjective machinery we use to grasp the world.

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The Toddler & The Rubber Ball

The Prototype
A toddler does not know the word 'ball.' They know the object through contact, feeling, and trying to eat it.

Unlearning
This pre-linguistic interaction is the 'primitive' truth of Name.

The Meditator's Task
One must return to this 'child-like' state—slowing down to observe the raw data of contact before convention takes over.

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Headline in Playfair Display

Name Conquers Everything

The Supremacy
“Name has surpassed everything. There is nothing greater than Name.”

The Convention
We live in a world of concepts, not things. We rely on the “crutches” of language to support our reality.

The Wound
Nama-Rupa is like a wound in which the arrow of craving is embedded. The Buddha, the “Incomparable Surgeon,” treats the wound (Name and Form) to remove the poison.

Existence is a Fire

The Metaphor
Existence is a fire that burns dependent on fuel. There is no ‘fire’ independent of the wood.

The Question
Is it the wood that burns, or the fire? They are deeply interrelated.

The Implication
We are not static ‘beings’; we are dynamic ‘burnings.’

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Upadana: Grasping is Fuel

Double Meaning
Upadana means both ‘Grasping’ and ‘Fuel.’

The Cycle
We grasp at existence, and that very grasping acts as the fuel that keeps the fire of suffering burning.

No Fuel, No Fire
Just as fire cannot exist without wood, suffering cannot exist without grasping.

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The Trap of ‘To Be’ or ‘Not To Be’

The Dilemma
Ancient thinkers struggled with Sat (Being) vs. Asat (Non-being). Does being come from non-being?

The Solution
The Buddha pointed to the process. When fuel is exhausted, the fire goes out. It doesn't ‘go’ anywhere. It is not annihilation; it is the cessation of a process.

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Redefining Nibbana: The ‘Going Out’ in Playfair Display

Not a Place
Nibbana is not a ‘city’ to arrive at.

The Event
It is the ‘Extinction’ or ‘Going Out’ of the flame.

The Terminology
While ‘Extinction’ sounds negative to the ego, in the context of a burning fire, it is the ultimate relief.

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Siti-bhavo: The Bliss of Cooling

The Result
The result of Nibbana is ‘Coolness’ (Health).

The Experience
It is the ‘Bliss of Appeasement.’ Freedom from the fever of lust, hate, and delusion.

The Cost
Normally, appeasement is bought at a cost. Nibbana is the only appeasement that comes ‘gratis’ (free of charge) once the fuel is abandoned.

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Seeing vs. Being

The Error

To view Nibbana as a distant object is like *'building a staircase to a palace one cannot see.'*

The Truth

Nibbana is immediate. When the fire is out, it is out. You don't look at "out-ness" from a distance.

Realization

One does not 'go' to Nibbana; the holy life 'merges' into it.

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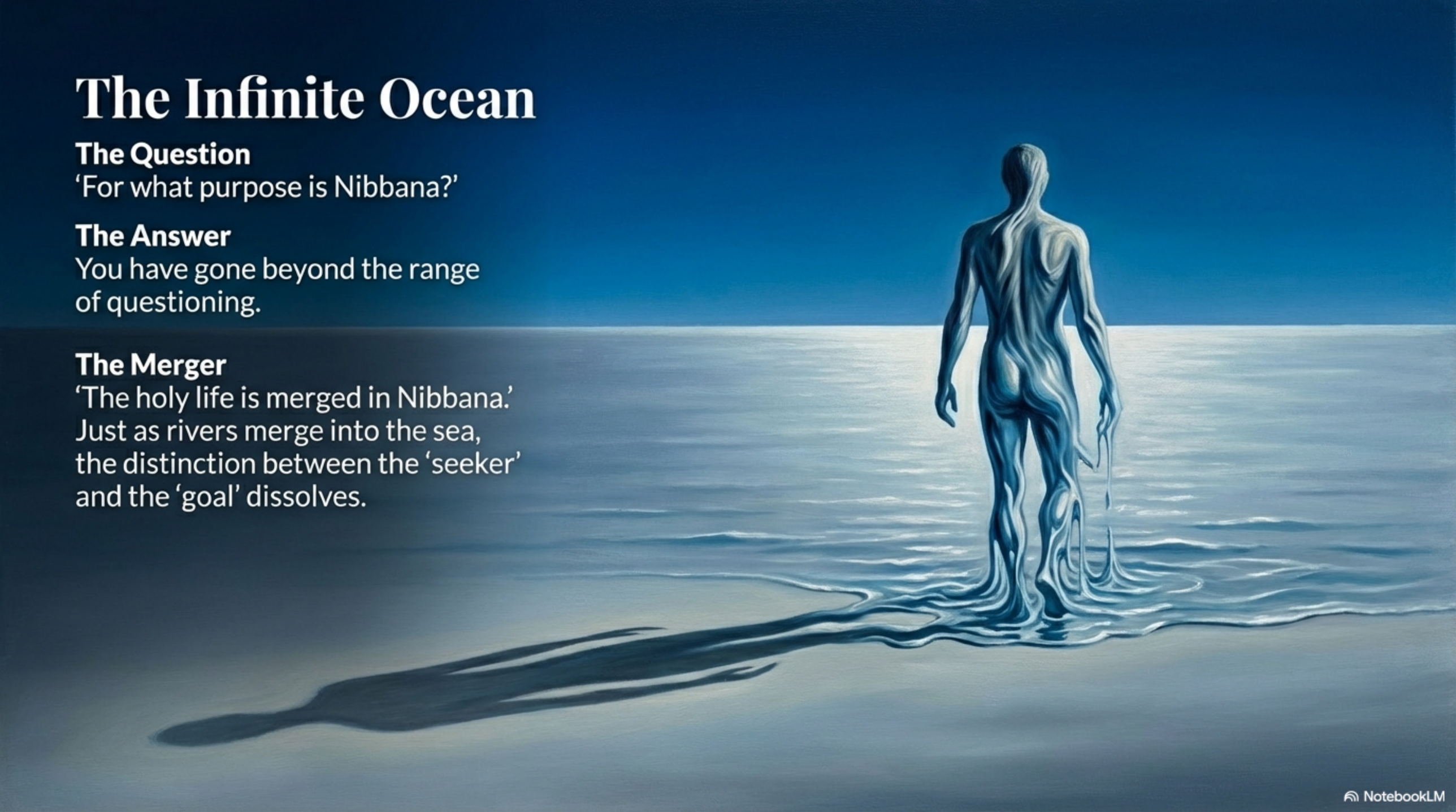
The Infinite Ocean

The Question
‘For what purpose is Nibbana?’

The Answer
You have gone beyond the range of questioning.

The Merger
‘The holy life is merged in Nibbana.’ Just as rivers merge into the sea, the distinction between the ‘seeker’ and the ‘goal’ dissolves.



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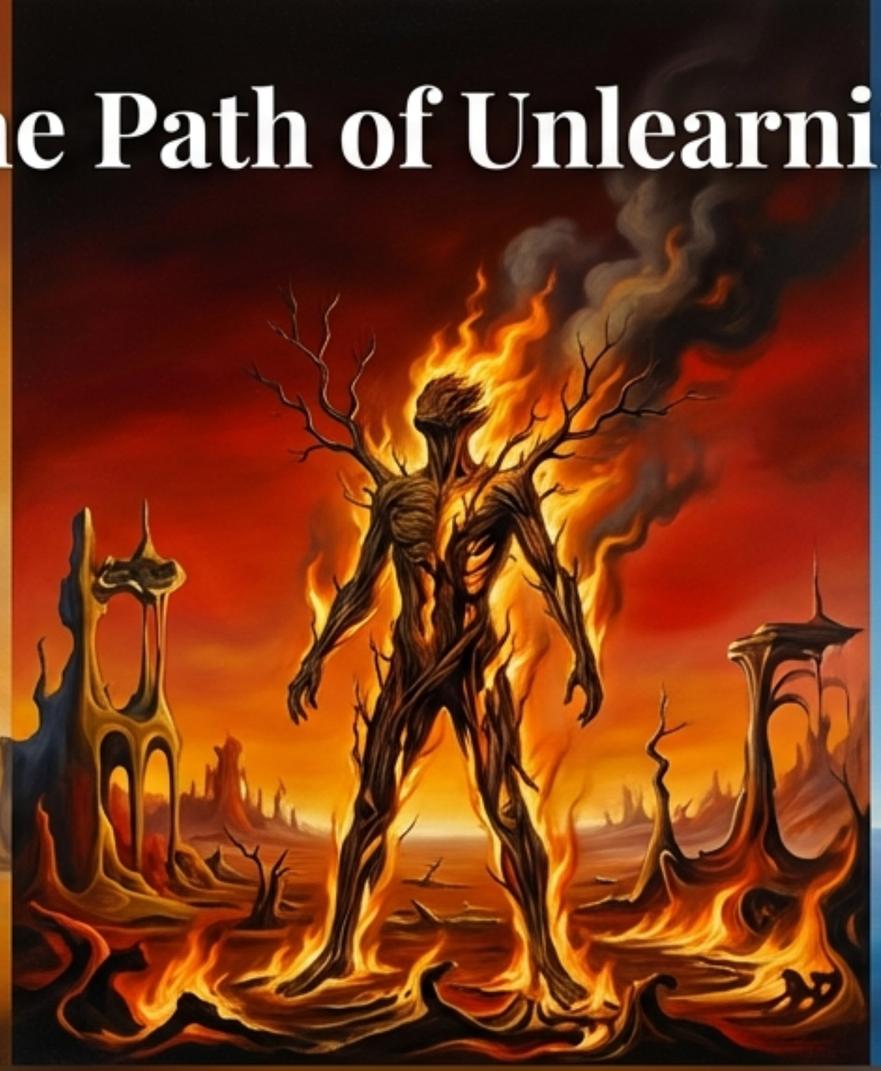
The Path of Unlearning

THE TANGLE



THE FIRE

THE COOLING

1. **Deconstruct Name & Form**: Return to the child's mind (Sensation > Label).
2. **Understand the Fire**: Recognize existence is burning, fueled by grasping.
3. **Realize the Cooling**: Allow the fire to go out.

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Headline in Playfair Display: “The Final Verdict”

‘This is Peaceful. This is Excellent.’
(*Etam santam, etam panitam*)

Namely, the stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction.

Meditative Attention

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